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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3903rd meeting of the Security Council, held on 13 July 1998, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Letter dated 29 June 1998 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/581); Letter dated 25 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/1998/582); Letter dated 25 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/1998/583)", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council condemns the massacres, other atrocities and violations of international humanitarian law committed in Zaire/Democratic Republic of the Congo, and especially its eastern provinces, including crimes against humanity and those other violations described in the Report of the Secretary-General's Investigative Team (S/1998/581). It notes the responses to the report provided by the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/1998/582) and Rwanda (S/1998/583). It recognizes the work of the Investigative Team in documenting some of these violations, in spite of the fact that the Team was not allowed to carry out its mission fully and without hindrance.

"The Security Council reaffirms its commitment to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States of the Great Lakes region.

"The Security Council recognizes the necessity to investigate further the massacres, other atrocities and violations of international humanitarian law and to prosecute those responsible. It deplores the delay in the administration of justice. The Council calls on the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to investigate without delay, in their respective countries, the allegations contained in the report of the Investigative Team and to bring to justice any persons found to have been involved in these or other massacres, atrocities and violations of international humanitarian law. The Council takes note of the stated willingness of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to try any of its nationals who are guilty of or were implicated in the alleged massacres (S/1998/582). Such action is of great importance in

helping to bring an end to impunity and to foster lasting peace and stability in the region. It urges Member States to cooperate with the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda in the investigation and prosecution of these persons.

"The Council encourages the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to seek international assistance, such as technical assistance, as needed, in this process. It also invites the Governments concerned to consider the inclusion of international observers, as appropriate. It requests the Governments concerned to provide an initial progress report to the Secretary-General by 15 October 1998 on the steps being taken to investigate and prosecute those responsible.

"The Security Council expresses its readiness to consider, as necessary in light of actions by the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, additional steps to ensure that the perpetrators of the massacres, other atrocities and violations of international humanitarian law are brought to justice.

"The Security Council urges Member States, relevant United Nations bodies and agencies and other international agencies to provide the necessary technical and other assistance, as requested, to the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda in the development of independent and impartial judicial systems.

"The Security Council expresses support for United Nations and other international activities to reduce ethnic tensions and promote national reconciliation in the region, and encourages the Governments concerned to continue to cooperate in these activities to bring about a real improvement in the situation.

"The Security Council attaches great importance to the role of the Organization of African Unity and welcomes its decision to establish the International Panel of Eminent Personalities to Investigate the Genocide in Rwanda and the Surrounding Events (S/1998/461). It appeals to Member States to contribute to the Special Trust Fund established to support the work of the Panel.

"The Security Council will remain actively seized of the matter."